



FRIDAY

JUN 26 1998

NEW ENGLAND NEWSCLIP AGENCY, INC.

B7

JF

# EPA money to clean up Buxton mill site

● Nearly \$1 million will demolish an abandoned mill along the Saco River and dispose of hazardous materials.

By MARY RAITT JORDAN  
Staff Writer

**BUXTON** - Nearly \$1 million in federal money will be used to demolish a crumbling, abandoned mill along the Saco River and clean up hazardous materials there.

Rogers Fibre Mill in Bar Mills, which manufactured fiberboard on the banks of the Saco River from 1917 until 1980, has been falling apart for years. With every heavy rain, boards and bricks cascade into a heap of debris. Neighbors and town

officials have long feared the building will collapse and unleash pollutants into the area's drinking water supply and fish hatcheries.

News of the \$960,000 from the federal Environmental Protection Agency was welcomed by Selectman Bob Brandenstein, who spent three years working on the issue.

"The mill is dilapidated to a point where it is a physical hazard, as well as a health hazard downstream," said Brandenstein. "I am just overjoyed something will be done."

The EPA will remove asbestos,

demolish the building, analyze and dispose hazardous substances and remove other debris. The project may take eight months.

Janis Tsang, the EPA project coordinator, will visit Buxton next Wednesday with an environmental response team. Although the EPA completed a preliminary assessment, they will now do an in-depth study of how to proceed.

"We want to make it safe, fast," Tsang said. "Portions of the building have already collapsed ... and the longer we wait the building may fall and release whatever is inside."

Tsang said among EPA's tasks will be developing a plan to contain or retrieve debris should the building collapse during the cleanup. How

much hazardous materials is in drums and tanks is uncertain.

Tsang said the EPA is taking on the project chiefly because of the mill's proximity to drinking water, the samples of pollutants, public safety issues and the threat to a salmon restocking effort.

These were the issues Buxton residents clamored about for years.

U.S. Sen. Olympia Snowe, R-Maine, brought the concerns to EPA officials.

"EPA's action will allow officials in Buxton - and residents who reside near the mill site - to breathe a little easier," Snowe said in a statement.

What will become of the riverfront

Super tuna Records Center  
SITE: Rogers Fibre  
BREAK: 13.3  
OTHER: \_\_\_\_\_

property is unknown.

One idea may be to develop a park dedicated to millworkers. To sort through the options, the town already has a \$10,000 grant from the state office of community development to study how to reclaim and develop the land.

"We will be prepared to carry on after the EPA has done their work," Brandenstein said.

As for 90-year-old Agnes Wiggin, a lifelong resident of Salmon Falls, she would like to see nature restore itself to the riverbank.

"It was a wonderful thing to the town once, but it's now an eyesore and a danger," Wiggin said. "I don't think anything needs to be there. It should be left as it once was."